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Wilkins, Isaac.

My services and losses in aid of the King's cause during the American revolution.

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WINNOWINGS IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

REVOLUTIONARY NARRATIVES.

No. III.

250 copies printed.
No. 156

My Services and Losses in aid of the King's Cause during the American Revolution.

BY

ISAAC WILKINS,

MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK ASSEMBLY,
&c., &c., &c.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.:
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NOTE.

THE following narrative will be welcomed, not merely as an autobiographical sketch of one of the most prominent of the New York loyalists, but as settling once for all the controversy concerning the authorship of the famous "A. W. Farmer" tracts, which have so puzzled and misled Bancroft, Sabine, Dawson, Winsor, and other American historians. A comparison of Wilkins' own statement, contained in this pamphlet, with the petition of Samuel Seabury, printed in the *Magazine of American History* (VIII, 117–122) must settle the matter, once for all, in favor of the latter.

There are sketches of Wilkins in

Sabine's *Loyalists of the American Revolution* (II, 431); Bolton's *History of Westchester* (II, 242); and Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit* (V, 464), the last being by his grandson, G. M. Wilkins. This is printed from the original in the English State Paper Office.

PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

97 Clark St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Commissioners appointed by Act of Parliament for enquiring into the Losses and Services of the American Loyalists.

The Memorial of Isaac Wilkins Sheweth,

That your Memorialist is one of His Majesty's Loyal American Subjects.

That at the beginning of the late Rebellion in America he was a representative of the Borough Town of West Chester in the General Assembly of the Province of New York.

That from his steady and invariable attachment to the British Government, and his open and determined Opposition to the Powers and meas-

ures of Congress, both as a member of the Legislature and otherwise, he was constrained to fly from America to avoid the popular Fury, and take refuge in England in the Spring of the year 1775, where he remained above a twelvemonth, by which means he was put to the expense of upwards of Two hundred Pounds Sterling, £200.

That in the Summer of 1776 he returned to America, and was with the Army under Sir William Howe when they landed that Year on Long Island.

That immediately after Sir William Howe had got possession of Long Island, your Memorialist's Wife and Family were driven from his Farm and Estate at West Chester by the Rebel Army, who plundered his Farm

and House, taking off or destroying his Stock of Cattle, Horses, Carriages, farming Utensils, Grain, Hay, Provisions, Liquors, Household Furniture, etc., and greatly damaging his House to the amount of more than Six Hundred Pounds Sterling *£600*

That from that period, the 1st of September 1776, your Memorialist with a numerous Family consisting of a Wife and eight Children, besides seven others, Servants and dependants, have lived in an hired House on Long Island, where, notwithstanding the most rigid Economy they have expended upwards of Four hundred Pounds Sterling p Annum which, to the 1st of September 1783, being seven Years will amount at £400 a year to the Sum of Two thousand Eight hun-

dred Pounds Sterling . . . £2800 by which means your Memorialist has expended all his Money, and has besides contracted Debt to the Amount of some hundred Pounds.

That all that now remains of your Memorialist's real property is his before mentioned Farm at West Chester which he purchased many years ago at the price of Four thousand Pounds New York Currency, and on which he has expended in Buildings and other Improvements, at least One thousand Pounds more.

That his Servants remained upon it without much interruption till about the last of July, when they were driven off and possession taken by certain Commissioners stiled *Commissioners of Sequestration* acting by Vir-

tue of an Act of the Legislature of the State of New York, and who have rented it with all the Crops upon it to a certain person for the use of the said State, by which means your Memorialist is not only deprived of this year's Profits of his Farm, but the future possession of it rendered precarious, altho' your Memorialist is persuaded it has never been confiscated.

That your Memorialist from the foregoing Causes is reduced with his numerous Family to a State of Poverty, and has now to look up to the Justice and Generosity of his Country for a Compensation of his Losses & Sufferings.

Your Memorialist acknowledges with Gratitude the Receipt of Two

hundred Pounds a year, allowed him by the Lords of the Treasury, commencing the 5th of January 1778 when he received the first £200, which by calculating it to the 5th of January 1784 ensuing, will be Six years allowance amounting to Twelve hundred Pounds Sterling . . . . . *£1200.*

Your Memorialist also acknowledges that he has at certain times during the War been enabled to receive some assistance from his Farm at West Chester, having for part of that period had a servant residing there to keep possession who, tho' exposed to continual Danger, and sometimes obliged to seek safety by flight, has by his Industry and management supplied your Memorialist with Sums of money and produce to the amount of

near Five hundred Pounds Sterling £500

Your Memorialist begs leave, also, to shew that his attachment to His Majesty and the British Constitution in which both Reason and Sentiment concur, will not admit of his becoming a Subject of the American States. He therefore intends, and is preparing, with his Family, to accept of the Asylum offered to them in Nova Scotia, preferring to remain no longer in the United States than until he can recover and dispose of his Estate and settle his affairs.

Your Memorialist, therefore, prays that his Case may be taken into your Consideration, in order that your Memorialist may be enabled under your Report to receive such Aid or

Relief as his Losses and Services may deserve.

ISAAC WILKINS.

A State of the Charges and Credits as set forth in the foregoing Memorial.

Expences of the Memorialist's Voyage to England in the year 1775 . . .		£200 " "
Losses & damages sustained when the Memorialist's Family were driven from his Farm in the year 1776 .		600 " "
Expenses of himself & Family on Long Island for Seven years at £400 p annum		2800 " "
		3600 " "
Credit.		
Six years allowance from the Treasury at £200 p annum	£1200 " "	
The product of the Farm at West Chester during the war	500 " "	1700 " "
Balance Sterling .		£1900 " "

Evidence in the Case of Isaac Wilkins Esq^{r}. late of New York . . 13th December 1785.

Claimant Sworn,

Says he is a native of the Island of Jamaica, came to New York very young with his Parents and continued there.—Was a Member of the Legislature and gave all opposition in his power to the measures of Congress. The Motion for sending Delegates to Congress was negatived in the House of Assembly.—Claimant one of the majority that carried that point in the Assembly—this made him obnoxious. Stood foremost in the Assembly against Congress. He was known to be the author of some publications against Congress, particularly an Address to the Counties of New York

&cc* Was reputed Author of a Pamphlet under name of A. W. Farmer. Steadily to the utmost of his power supported British Government.—Never signed any Non-Importation agreemt. Uniformly against the measures of Republicans—this constrain'd him to fly.—In the Spring of 1775 went to England, and returned

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* I have been unable to find any tract from the New York presses of that period which answers to this title, but it was probably one of the following:

Short Advice to the Counties of New York By a County Gentleman. New-York. Printed by James Rivington, 1775.

A Serious Address to the Inhabitants of the Colony of New York, Containing a full and minute Survey of the Boston-Port Act, ... New-York: Printed by John Holt, ... M,DCC.-LXXIV.

in 1776 with Sir William Howe & remained in Long Island.—His Family driven from West Chester came to him there. His wife fled in such precipitation she could not save more than her clothes. The Americans came on purpose to destroy his Property, hearing the Claimant was with the British Army. In January 1778 Lord North unsolicited gave him an allowance of £200 p Annum which he still receives.

Property—Remained in New York after Evacuation for the purpose of getting possession of his Estate at West Chester which he did, and sold it for £2500 New York Currency, half what he had paid for it, the Americans allowed him to sell it, paying Attention to the Articles of Peace, believes

it generally was allowed where Confiscation had not taken place before the Peace for persons to sell.

When his Family were driven from his Estate at West Chester he suffered the following Losses.

Stock, (values yoke of Oxen at £25 N. Y. Currency.)

32 Head of Cattle at £6 p Head New York Currency	£192	"	"
2 Pair Oxen	50	"	"
6 Horses a £20 p head	120	"	"
50 Sheep @ 10/ p head	25	"	"
30 Hogs @ 9/ Sterling p head . .	23	19	11
Hay, Grain of various kinds containing the whole Crop of the year, Butter &cc valued at . . .	300	"	"
Farming Implements	100	"	"
Damage to Barn & House	170	"	"
Furniture & Cloaths &cc	500	"	"

All these things were intirely lost.

Expences when obliged to fly to England cost £400 Sterling for which he charges only £200—He had no allowance at that time.

Expence at Long Island of Self & Family from the End of 1776 to the End of the year 1783 during which time he had no Rations or assistance from Government at 400£ p Annum, £2800.

First Judge of the Court of Common Pleas at Shelbourne.

His name does not appear in the Act of Confiscation which he attributes to the Friendship of his Brother.

His Losses were occasioned by a Party sent on purpose to destroy his Property, and take his wife prisoner when the Americans heard that the Claimant was with the British Army.

His wife just escaped before they got down. Some of the Claimant's servants were taken Prisoners, and his whole property was at that time destroyed.

Major Thomas Barclay, Sworn.

Says he knew the Claimant intimately in 1775, at the commencement of the Troubles he was Representative for the Borough of West Chester. He opposed in the House of Assembly warmly all measures of Congress. Both in his public and private Capacity opposed the measures of the Americans, which he believes was his Reason for quitting the States. Knew his Farm at West Chester, saw it in 1774 then in good Order, Saw it in 1776 when it had been much damaged both by Americans, British and Hessians.

The Revd Mr Panton Sworn.

Says the Claimant was uniformly a determined Loyalist, on first movement he stood forth to counteract the Measures of the Rebels. Wilkins was on his Farm about 4 days before General Howe landed in ———, Mrs Wilkins had left the House some days before, and it was said the House had been plundered by the American Troops, — he understood that the House had been completely rifled by the Americans.

Joshua Pell late of West Chester New York Sworn,

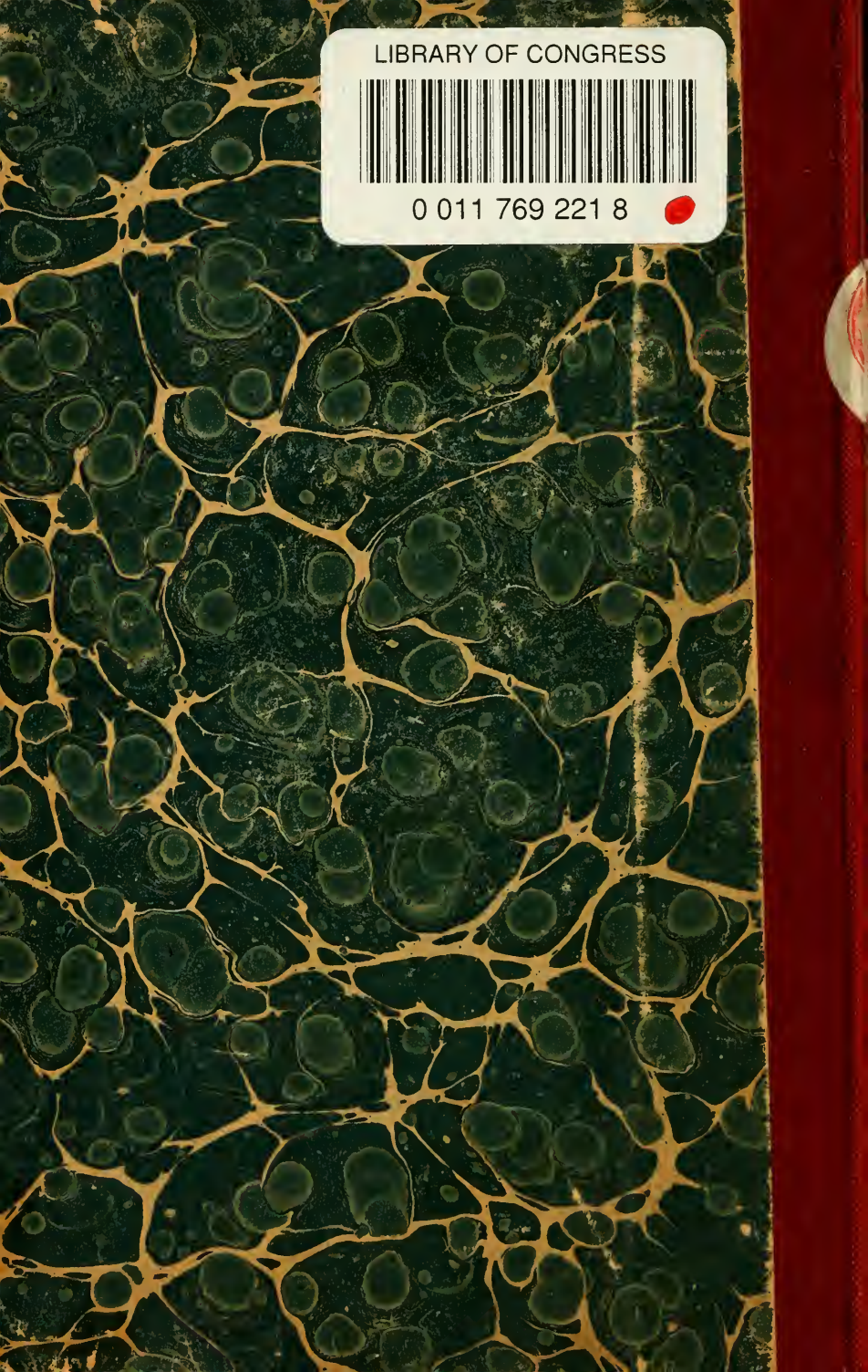
Says he knew the Claimants Loyalty, the Witness left his house when the Town of New York was burnt. Thinks he was at home when a Party of the Americans came to plunder

Mr. Wilkins House, was not at the house after the damage but heard of it. He was acquainted with Mr. Wilkins, and had before this frequently seen his Farm: He was inform'd it was well stocked, and the people said how sorry they were that his Stock had been so plundered by the Americans.—He had been frequently in Mr. Wilkins' House before. It was very well furnished.

He had been thro' his Farm, thought it well Stock'd and had been often so informed.

He understood the whole Damage had been done at one time (except a small part of Furniture carried on board) and the whole had been plundered then. There was a party of Americans in the Neighborhood all

about the place—whether sent on purpose against Mr. Wilkins the witness knows not.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